

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /099 W  
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R 090845Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5738

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, VS, SN, ID

SUBJECT: SRV OIL DELEGATION VISITING SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA

REF: A) 75 STATE 222174, B) 75 SINGAPORE 4152.

SUMMARY: A THREE-MAN DELEGATION FROM THE SRV DIRECTORATE OF OIL AND GAS PAID AN UNPUBLICIZED "PRIVATE" VISIT TO SINGAPORE LAST WEEK, BEFORE GOING ON TO INDONESIA. THE VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS WERE GUESTS OF COMEX, THE FRENCH UNDERWATER ENGINEERING FIRM. WHILE IN SINGAPORE, THEY MET INFORMALLY WITH U.S. AND OTHER FOREIGN OIL COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES AND GOS OFFICIALS, AND VISITED SHIPYARDS AND OTHER OILFIELD SUPPORT FACILITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. A THREE-MAN DELEGATION FROM THE SRV DIRECTORATE OF OIL AND GAS ARRIVED IN SINGAPORE JUNE 29 FOR A WEEK-LONG VISIT. IT LEFT SINGAPORE ON JULY 5 FOR JAKARTA  
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AND BALIKPAPAN, AND WILL RETURN TO SINGAPORE TOWARD

THE END OF NEXT WEEK (JULY 15 OR 16).

2. THE MISSION IS LED BY NGUYEN NGOC SOM, DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE OIL AND GAS COMPANY: NGUYEN IS A SOUTHERNER AND A GEOLIST. ACCOMPANYING HIM IS THO NGUYEN QUANG, HEAD OF CONSTRUCTION FOR THE SAME FIRM, AND DAO BICH THAO, WHO SERVES AS THE PARTY'S INTERPRETER (DAO, WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN, IS ALSO A GEOLOGIST).

3. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT DIRECTORATE OF OIL AND GAS NOW SPLIT INTO SOUTH VIETNAM OIL & GAS COMPANY AND NORTH VIETNAM OIL & GAS COMPANY. FORMER WILL HAVE BASIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR OFFSHORE DEVELOPMENT. IF THIS IS IN FACT THE CASE, NGUYEN IS THE MAN EFFECTIVELY IN CHARGE OF ALL SRV OFFSHORE WORK.

4. THE MISSION'S STAY IN SINGAPORE HAS BEEN TREATED BY THE GOS AS A "PURELY PERSONAL" VISIT. NO ANNOUNCEMENT OR NEWS ARTICLE OF ANY KIND HAS APPEARED IN THE SINGAPORE PRESS, AND GOS OFFICIAL WOULD TELL EMBASSY OFFICER ONLY THAT THE GROUP HAD COME HERE AT THE INVITATION OF A "LOCALLY-BASED COMPANY". (COMMENT: GOS PERHAPS CONCERNED THAT PUBLICITY FOR OIL AND GAS DIRECTORATE MISSION COULD INVEST JULY 13 VISIT TO SINGAPORE OF SRV DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PHAN HIEN (SINGAPORE 3108) WITH GREATER SIGNIFICANCE THAN WARRANTED; VIETNAMESE MAY ALSO HAVE REQUESTED NO PUBLICITY IN ORDER NOT TO UPSTAGE HIEN, WHO WILL ALSO BE VISITING OIL-RELATED INDUSTRIES IN SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA.)

5. SRV OIL OFFICIALS WERE INVITED TO SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA BY FRENCH UNDERWATER ENGINEERING FIRM, COMPAGNE MARITIME D'EXPERTISE (COMEX). COMEX IS ALSO PAYING ALL THE GROUP'S EXPENSES. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT COMEX WAS THE FIRM WHICH TRIED TO ARRANGE THE ABORTIVE SINGAPORE MEETING LAST SEPTEMBER BETWEEN PRG REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIALS OF FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES FORMERLY HOLDING CONCESSIONS OFF-SHORE SOUTH VIETNAM (REFTELS).

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6. COMEX APPARENTLY NOW SERVING IN CAPACITY OF TECHNICAL ADVISER TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE OIL AND GAS COMPANY. DURING SIX DAY VISIT TO SINGAPORE, MOST OF SVOGC VISITS AND CONTRACTS WERE AT SUGGESTION OF COMEX. HOWEVER, OIL MISSION ALSO SAW SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS AT INITIATIVE OF LE VAN MAU, CHIEF SRV TRADE REPRESENTATIVE IN SINGAPORE.

7. APPARENTLY TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO ANYONE,

COMEX MADE NO PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS FOR MISSION TO SEE U.S. OIL COMPANIES. HOWEVER, VIETNAMESE UPON ARRIVAL EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST IN MEETING U.S. OILMEN, AND COMEX OBLIGED BY HOSTING DINNER TO WHICH FOREIGN OIL COMPANY OFFICIALS WERE INVITED. FIRMS ATTENDING DINNER WERE CITIES SERVICE, MARATHON, TEXACO, BOW VALLEY AND IOL. JAPANESE FIRMS WERE NOT INVITED AND SEVERAL FIRMS INVITED (ESSO, MOBIL, TOTAL) DID NOT ATTEND. ALSO ATTENDING AT COMEX'S INVITATION WERE GOS OFFICIALS LEE CHIONG GIAM, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND TOH TSE MING, THE U.S. DESK OFFICER AND OFFSHORE OIL PROJECTS OFFICER AT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD.

8. SRV GROUP VISITED SEVERAL INDUSTRIES IN SINGAPORE, INCLUDING SEMBAWANG, BETHLEHEM AND FAR EAST LEVINGSTON SHIPYARDS AND LOYANG OFFSHORE MARINE BASE. COMEX HAS ASKED EDB TO ARRANGE FOR GROUP ON RETURN NEXT WEEK TO VISIT OTHER OILFIELD SUPPORT INDUSTRIES INCLUDING CAMERON IRON, VETCO, AND OTIS.

9. MISSION DISCUSSIONS WITH OIL COMPANIES WERE REPORTEDLY QUITE GENERAL. THE VIETNAMESE EXPRESSED STRONG DESIRE TO START OFFSHORE DRILLING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, NOW THAT UNSPECIFIED DIFFICULTIES ATTRIBUTED TO EXISTENCE OF TWO ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. THEY INDICATED THAT THEY WELCOMED U.S. FIRMS' PARTICIPATING, BUT WERE AWARE OF THE LEGAL BARRIERS TO THEM DOING SO AT THIS TIME.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, MEETING DELEGATIONS  
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**Draft Date:** 09 JUL 1976  
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**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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